

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

1. (Currently Amended): Apparatus for effecting a desired geometric change in the annulus of a heart valve and limiting mitral leaflet prolapse, said apparatus comprising:

first and second plication bands, each said plication band comprising:

first and second substantially straight and parallel legs, each having a first end, the first ends of said first and second legs being adapted to pierce heart valve tissue; and

a bridge having first and second ends, the first end of said bridge being connected to said first leg and the second end of said bridge being connected to said second leg, such that the first ends of said first and second legs are separated by a first distance;

said bridge being configured such that when the first ends of said first and second legs have pierced tissue at the first distance, said bridge is deformable so as to cause the first ends of said first and second legs to each move toward the other so as to thereafter be opposed to each other first

end-to-first end with a distance of less than the first distance therebetween, whereby said first and second legs gather together pierced tissue to effect a contraction of the annulus of the heart valve; and

~~a linking construct~~ an elongated linking strip having first and second ends and connected proximate the first end thereof to said first plication band and proximate the second end thereof to said second plication band, the linking strip being adapted to extend across the annulus of the heart valve and to draw the first and second plication bands toward each other.

2. (Previously Presented): A method for effecting a desired geometric change in the annulus of a heart valve and limiting mitral leaflet prolapse, said method comprising the steps of:

providing apparatus for effecting a contraction in the annulus of the heart valve, the apparatus comprising:

first and second plication bands, each plication band comprising:

first and second substantially straight and parallel legs, each having a first end, the first ends of said

first and second legs being adapted to pierce heart valve tissue;
and

a bridge having first and second ends,
the first end of said bridge being connected to said first leg
and the second end of said bridge being connected to said second
leg, such that the first ends of said first and second legs are
separated by a first distance;

said bridge being configured such that
when the first ends of said first and second legs have pierced
tissue at the first distance, said bridge is deformable so as to
cause the first ends of said first and second legs each to move
toward one another so as to thereafter be separated by a second,
shorter distance, whereby said first and second legs gather
together pierced tissue to effect the contraction in the annulus
of the heart valve; and

a linking construct connected proximate a first end
thereof to said first plication band and proximate a second end
thereof to said second plication band;

deploying the first plication band in a first portion of
tissue; and

deploying the second plication band in a second portion of
tissue such that the linking construct extends across a mouth of

the valve and draws the first and second portions of tissue together, thereby limiting leaflet prolapse.